

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1554

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 9332

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, PFOR, MY

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES: BOAT CASES AND UNHCR APPEAL FOR
FIRST ASYLUM AND RESETTLEMENT

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 4521

1. ALTHOUGH NO BALL OF FIRE, SAMPATKUMAR IS A CONSIDERABLY
WARMER PRODUCT THAN THE CHAPS UNHCR HAD OUT HERE LAST YEAR.
HONG KONG, HOWEVER, MAY NOT BE GOOD PLACE TO FORM SUCH JUDG-
MENTS SINCE UNHCR REP BASICALLY HAS TWO PURPOSES HERE: TO
PROVIDE A SORT OF UMBRELLA UNDER WHICH THE WELL-QUALIFIED
AND EFFICIENT VOLUNTARY AGENCIES CAN WORK WITH THE HKG TO
LOOK AFTER THE REFUGEES AND IN LINE WITH THE UNHCR'S
APPEAL TO MAKE PRO FORMA CALLS ON FOREIGN MISSIONS HERE.
SAMPATKUMAR HAS FULFILLED THESE TWO FUNCTIONS QUITE WELL
AND WE THINK THAT HE COULD BE REPLACED BY A LOWER RANKING
REPRESENTATIVE WHO WOULD NOT NECESSARILY STAY HERE ALL THE
TIME BUT COULD COME TO HONG KONG TO DEAL WITH EACH NEW
BATCH OF REFUGEES. THIS MEANS THAT SAMPATKUMAR WOULD BE
FREE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE NOW MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF
MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE.

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2. AMONG THE FACTS OF LIFE WE HAVE TO FACE IS THAT THE CURRENT CROP OF REFUGEES IS DETERMINED AND BRAVE AND ALL WANT TO GO TO THE US. THIS MEANS THAT OTHER COUNTRIES NOT ONLY HAVE TO OFFER RESETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES TO THE REFUGEES BUT MUST IN EFFECT ACTIVELY RECRUIT THEM. SEVERAL CONSULATES GENERAL HERE HAVE MADE SINCERE EFFORTS TO SHOW THE AVA REFUGEES THAT SOME OF THEM WOULD BE WELCOME IN THEIR COUNTRIES BUT HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN THAT THE REFUGEES SEEM FIRMLY FIXED ON GOING TO THE UNITED STATES. SO FAR, THESE SHOW NO SIGNS OF CHANGING THEIR MINDS EVEN IN THE FACE OF OUR OFT-REPEATED WARNINGS THAT THERE IS NO SURE QUARANGEE THAT TEY WILL BE ABLE TO END UP IN THE UNITED STATES. AT THE SAME TIME, IF THE US DOESN'T SHOW SOME PROGRESS IN TAKING THE REFUGEES QUICKLY OUT OF PLACES SUCH AS HONG KONG, SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES IT WILL BECOME MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT TO HAVE THESE COUNTRIES ACCEPT THE REFUGEES ON A TEMPORARY BASIS FOR EVENTUAL RESETTLEMENT. WE DON'T HAVE ANY REAL WAY OUT OF THIS DILEMMA IN MIND AT THIS POST BUT HOPE THAT SOME HIGH LEVEL THINKING IS BEING DONE ON IT BECAUSE "INTERNATIONALISZATION" UP TO THIS POINT REALLY CONSISTS OF THE UNHCR URGING COUNTRIES IN SEA TO TAKE THESE SO-CALLED BOAT CASES ON A TEMPORARY BASIS UNTIL THE US CAN GET AROUND TO RESETTLING THEM.
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